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**THE BEGINNINGS  
OF  
PSYCHOANALYSIS  
IN INDIA**

**BOSE-FREUD  
CORRESPONDENCE**

**INDIAN PSYCHOANALYTICAL SOCIETY  
CALCUTTA - 700 009**

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## PREFACE

PSYCHOANALYSIS in India had a somewhat indigenous origin. Between 1911 and 1921 Dr. Girindrasekhar Bose, the founder of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society, was experimenting with a psychological method of treatment of mental patients which was akin to psychoanalysis. In 1921 the University of Calcutta conferred on him the Doctor of Science degree on his thesis titled, 'The Concept of Repression'. In those days not many in India, even among the men of medicine and psychology, had heard of Freud's name. Neither Freud's original works, nor their English translations, were available in the country.

In 1921, the historical phenomenon of Bose-Freud correspondence began. Some of their letters were first published in *Samiksa* Vol. 10, No. 2 & 3, in the year 1938. When in 1963 Miss Anna Freud wrote to Dr. T. C. Sinha, then president of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society, asking for these letters to be preserved in the Freud archive, the request was conveyed to Mrs. Bose, with whom was the Bose-Freud file since Bose's death in 1953, who sent all the available documents to Anna Freud.

The publication of these letters in this new edition will, we hope, serve all those who may be interested in the origin of psychoanalysis in India.

*Indian Psychoanalytical Society*

Calcutta  
September 1999

Letter from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. S. Freud

14, Parsi Bagan  
Amherst Street P.O.  
Calcutta  
India

Professor Sigmund Freud, LL.D.  
Vienna IX  
Berggasse 19  
Vienna  
Austria

Dear Sir,

I take the liberty to send you under separate cover a book entitled *The Concept of Repression* as an insignificant presentation from its author.

Along with my friends and relations, I have been a warm admirer of your theories and science ; and it might interest you to learn that your name has been a household word in our family for the past decade.

I shall be delighted to have your opinion and suggestions about my work.

Hoping to hear from you in due course.

I remain, Dear Sir,  
Yours very sincerely

G.Bose

Letter dated May 29, 1921 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud

May 29th 1921  
Wien, IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge the receipt of your book on *The Concept of Repression* and am glad to testify the correctness of its principal views and the good sense appearing in it. My surprise was great that psycho-analysis should have met with so much interest and recognition in your far off country.

It is interesting that theoretical reasoning and deduction does play so great a part in your demonstration of the matter which with us is rather treated empirically. It is deeply to be regretted that German literature was not accessible to you but I trust the translation work which we are preparing here (*The Internat. Journal of Psych.*) will slowly improve the situation.

Believe me to be, dear Sir, yours most respectfully,

Freud

P.S. I will always be glad to get more of your news.

Letter from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. Dr. Freud

Prof. Dr. Freud  
Wien, IX  
Berggasse 19  
Austria

Dear Sir,

I was extremely gratified to receive your kind note of 29th May last. I shall be very much obliged if you will kindly let me know the details in respect to the publisher, price etc. of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. Has any Association undertaken the publication of the journal ?

I hope you will pardon my liberty if I ask you to send me a photograph of yours. Myself, my relations and friends and a wide circle of admirers have long been eager for it. I have not as yet come across your photograph in any book, or periodical, otherwise I would not have troubled you with this request. Such a gift from your hands would have valuable association.

My agent for my book asks me to write to you whether he could have an expression of opinion from you regarding the book for publication and enquires whether the book which is in English has got any chance of success in Austria and Germany and what periodicals would be most suitable for advertisement.

I am sorry to have troubled you but my ignorance about Austria and Germany is my excuse.

Yours sincerely,

G. Bose

Letter dated August 3, 1921 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Badgastein  
Aug. 3rd 1921

Dear Sir,

I am now out of town far away in the mountains and not likely to return before October 1st. After that term I will attend to both of your requests. I could not do it now, as I have got neither your book nor my photograph with me. The publisher of the *Internat Zeitsch* and the English journal of P.A. will send you the information you want.

Yours most respectfully

Freud

Letter dated 24.11.21 from Dr. G. Bose to Dr. Freud

24th November 1921

Dear Dr. Freud,

I received your postcard from Badgastein duly and as I did not like to disturb you during your holidays, I refrained from writing to you. I hope you have now returned to Vienna and I venture to approach you again with my two requests—one for myself for a photograph of yours and the other on behalf of my agent for an expression of opinion regarding my book for publication.

I have to thank you for the information about the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. I have now been receiving the publication regularly and I like it very much. You will be pleased to learn that I am now trying to have an Indian Psychoanalytical Association at Calcutta affiliated to the International Association. A number of medical men and psychologists have interested themselves in the movement and we hope to start the association by January next. I have been in communication with Dr. Jones regarding the association and he has given me much practical and sound advice. I should very much like to have your suggestions on the point. I hope to send you in the near future a copy of the draft rules and regulations of the association.

I take the liberty to send you herewith a question paper for this year on 'Mental Pathology' for the M.A. and M.Sc. students of the Calcutta University. This is the second paper in Experimental Psychology—the other three papers being 'Physiological Psychology', 'Child and Educational Psychology' and 'Animal Psychology'. There are also four practical papers covering the whole subject. The first half of the accompanying paper has been set by me and the second half by Dr. B. C. Ghosh. Psychoanalysis is daily gaining popularity here and even the lay periodicals and dailies in vernacular are discussing the subject now.

Hope this will find you in good health and spirits.

Yours sincerely

Girindrasekhar Bose

Letter dated 26.1.22 from Dr. G. Bose to Dr. Freud

26.1.22

Dear Dr. Freud,

Most likely you have received my last letter to which I am expecting a reply. You will be glad to learn that we have been able to start a psychoanalytical society in Calcutta. I am sending you herewith the proceedings of the inaugural meeting and I shall be very glad to have your suggestions regarding our society. I have applied for affiliation to the International Association.

A friend of mine Mr. J. Sen, a celebrated Indian artist and an ardent admirer of yours, has drawn from imagination a pencil sketch which he thinks 'you ought to look like.' I am sending you the original, keeping a copy for myself which I would like to compare with your photo when it arrives. Needless to say he has not the slightest information about your features.

Will it be possible for you to come out to India for a few weeks and to deliver a course of lectures in the Calcutta University? If so, I shall be glad to know about your terms so that I might place them before the proper authorities.

Wishing you a happy new year  
Yours sincerely

G. Bose

Letter dated Feb. 20, 1922 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud

February 20th 1922  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Mr. Bose

At last I can send you the photograph you wished for—it will come to you from Hamburg—and write the few lines which you ask on behalf of your agent. As my English is very deficient you are invited to change my expressions so as to fit your purpose.

"It was a great and pleasant surprise that the first book on a psychoanalytic subject which came to us from that part of the world (India) should display so good a knowledge of psychoanalysis, so deep an insight into its difficulties and so much of deep-going original thought. Dr. Bose has singled out the concept of repression for his inquiry and in treating this theoretical matter has provided us with precious suggestions and intense motives for further study. Dr. Bose is aiming at a philosophical evolution and elaboration of our crude, practical concepts and I can only wish, psychoanalysis should soon reach up to the level, to which he strives to raise it."

Having heard of your success in starting a psychoanalytic group in your country, I heartily congratulate you on it. May we meet one day not too far off, as I am rather old (66 years).

Sincerely yours

Freud

**Letter dated March 1st. 1922 from Prof. Freud to Dr. G. Bose**

Wien, March 1st 1922

Dear Dr. Bose,

I am glad to acknowledge letter and report of January 25th and hope my letter of February 24th will have safely arrived.

The imaginative portrait you sent me is very nice indeed, far too nice for the subject. You will soon have occasion to confront it with the photo and see that the artist did not take into account certain racial characters.

Yours sincerely

Freud

P.S. I am too old to come over to India and very busy here. Try it the other way and come to Europe.

**Letter from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. S. Freud**

Prof. Sigmund Freud, M.D.,LL.D.  
Berggasse 19  
Vienna IX

Dear Dr. Freud,

I was very much pleased with your postcard dated 1-3-22 and the photograph so kindly sent. Your portrait has been very acceptable to a wide circle of friends.

Please accept my thanks for the very kind opinion you have given on my book.

You ask me to come over to Europe and I must confess that it would give me the greatest pleasure to see you and travel with that end in view. Probably time will come for such an opportunity.

On behalf of our Society I beg to extend my thanks to you for your good wishes.

You will be glad to learn that Dr. Ernest Jones has been kind enough to affiliate our Indian Psychoanalytical Society to the International Society.

Trusting this will find you in the enjoyment of health and spirits.

I remain,  
yours very sincerely

G. Bose.

Letter dated 27. 10. 22 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud

Oct. 27th, 1922  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Dr. Bose,

I heartily congratulate you on the reception of your Society as one of the groups of the Internat. Ps. Associate which occurred at the Berlin Congress a month ago.

Now, as I am Editor of the German Zeitschrift fur Ps.A. as well as of the English Journal of Ps.A., I beg you to consent that your name may be printed on the cover of both journals as the leader and representative of the Indian group in the same way the other presidents are mentioned. If you agree it may first be done in the first number of the year 1923.

I hope to find soon some of your contributions in our journal.  
With kindest regards.

Yours  
Freud

Letter dated 23. 11.22 from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. Freud

23rd Nov. 1922  
14 Parsi Bagan

Dear Prof. Freud,

I am extremely grateful to you for your very kind letter dated 27th Oct. 1922. Some time ago I also received a communication from Dr. Ernest Jones asking me to act as associate editor for India of the International Journal and the Zeitschrift fur PA. I shall be very glad to be of any use to you in the editing of the Journals and shall try my best to do whatever portion of the work you may allot to me. I may remind you however that I do not know German, although I may be able to get the help of German-knowing friends here. I hope to send you some contributions for the Journal in the near future.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year and many many returns of the same.

Yours very sincerely  
G. Bose

Letter dated 28.12.23 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Wein ,28, XII . 23

Dear Professor Bose,

A happy New Year to you and as much success in your work as you deserve.

Yours most sincerely

Freud

Letter dated 2.1.29 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud.

2.1.1929

Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Dr. Bose,

I am glad of having got your letter. Since you joined our association I regretted that our Indian group did not attain closer contact with the others. Any sign of the contrary is pleasant to me.

To be sure I am not surprised by the result of Prof. Halder's study of Tagore poetry. But it may appear convincing to other people as well and so I think it ought to be published. May I wait for your permission to send it to Dr. Jones with my recommendation ?

The part of your own work which you will send to me may be of my intense interest. My health is not strong, my mind still active although not productive.

With kind regards and best wishes.

Sincerely yours

Freud

Letter dated 31-1-29 from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. Dr. Freud

14 Parsibagan  
Calcutta, 31st January, 1929

Dear Prof. Freud,

Many thanks for your kind letter. A copy of Prof. Halder's paper on Tagore poetry has already been sent to Dr. Jones and Prof. Halder will be very grateful if you would kindly recommend it for publication in the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*.

I am sending you under separate cover some of my own papers. The articles marked, 'P' are written on popular lines and are meant for inclusion along with other papers in a book which is in preparation for the lay public. The other articles are of a more technical nature and are meant for another book. When published all the articles of this series will be supplemented with short clinical records in support of the contentions put forth in them. A few of the papers will be further elaborated. I would draw your particular attention to my paper on Oedipus Wish where I have ventured to differ from you in some respects. I have indicated the order (see page 15) in which the articles are to be read.

I also enclose a Bengali book on dreams which I have just published. Your portrait which appears in the book is from a *pencil drawing* by my friend Mr. J. K. Sen, the renowned artist, from the photograph you kindly sent me some years ago. Please accept the book as a token of my deepest regards for the Father of Psycho-analysis. An abridged English translation of the contents of this book will appear as a chapter in my popular book.

Wishing you health and long life.

Yours sincerely,

G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Sigmund Freud  
Wien IX Berggasse 19  
Austria.

## ORDER IN WHICH THE ARTICLES ARE TO BE READ

### *Popular Articles*

1. Free Association Method in Psychoanalysis
2. Sex in Psychoanalysis
3. Psychoanalysis in Business
4. Temper and Psychoanalysis
5. Crime and Psychoanalysis

### *Technical Articles*

1. Relationship between Psychology and Psychiatry
2. Reliability of Psycho-analytical Findings
3. Is Perception an Illusion ?
4. Nature of Wish
5. Analysis of Wish
6. Pleasure in Wish
7. The Genesis of Homosexuality
8. The Genesis and Adjustment of the Oedipus Wish

the agency which brought about the shock. This is an effort at identification with the offending agent. The repeated bringing up of the shock situation in dreams is an effort on the part of the unsatisfied opposite wish to get a satisfaction. This is determined by the pleasure principle. There is no need to suppose the functioning of the repetition compulsion.

The theory of the opposite wish will explain the occurrence in pairs in the same individual of such traits as sadism and masochism, observationism and exhibitionism etc. This theory will also explain the relationship between the different wishes that emerge from the unconscious in a definite sequence during analysis.

This theory enables the analyst to predict beforehand the possibility of emergence in consciousness of a particular repressed wish from an examination of the grammatical forms of speech.

I have reserved the discussion of the practical points of applicability of this theory a separate chapter in my book. Since the elaboration of this theory in my 'Concept of Repression', I have modified it in some important details in view of new facts that have come up during analysis. I shall send you a copy when this chapter is written.

I am sorry I have troubled you with this long letter ; my only excuse is that I want my findings to be tested in the light of your unique experience.

Trusting this finds you in good health and wishing you a long life.

Your sincerely,

G. Bose

Letter dated 12.5.29 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud

May 12th, 1929  
Wein IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Prof. Bose,

Thank you for your explanations. I am fully impressed by the difference in castration reaction between Indian and European patients and promise to keep my attention fixed on the problem of the opposite wish which you accentuate. This latter one is too important for a hasty decision, I am glad I have to expect another publication of yours. I wonder what the relation of the opposite wish to the phenomena of ambivalence "may be".

I am sorry I have to disappoint Dr. Sarkar who sent me several interesting letters as a correspondent but my activity is no more what it used to be before.

With kindest regards.

Yours truly,

Freud

**Letter from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. Dr. Freud**

My dear Professor Freud,

I have great pleasure in sending you on behalf of the Indian Psycho-analytical Society by insured parcel post to-day one ivory statuette with stand and a roll containing two copies of Sanskrit address to you printed on silk and three copies of the same printed on paper with the translation in type and also three copies of the proceedings of the meeting of the Society held on 6th May last to celebrate your 75th birthday anniversary. The Indian Society will be very grateful if you will kindly accept these small presents. It took us some time to have the statuette specially made for you, hence the delay. A line in reply informing me of the safe arrival of the articles will be immensely appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

G. Bose

**Letter dated 13.12.31 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose**

Prof. Dr. Freud

Dec. 13th 1931

Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Dr. Bose,

Now I am in possession of all your sendings, the statue, its pedestal, the proceedings and the poem. I feel gratefully elated and accept these presents, as a kind of compensation for the sad fact that I have no chance of ever meeting you or any other member of your society. [The only man among you I know is Dr. Berkeley Hill.] Please give my hearty thanks to all your members and accept it especially for yourself.

The statuette is charming. I gave it the place of honour on my desk. As long as I can enjoy life it will recall to my mind the progress of psychoanalysis, the proud conquest it has made in foreign countries and the kind feelings for me it has aroused in some of my contemporaries at least.

With affectionate wishes.

Yours

Sigm. Freud

Letter dated 4.10.32 from Dr. G. Bose to Prof. Dr. Freud

14 Parsibagan  
Calcutta, 4th Oct., 1932

My dear Prof. Freud,

I am extremely grateful to you for all the kindness you have shown to my daughter and my son-in-law while they were in Vienna. They are full of gratitude to yourself, your wife and daughter and your sister-in-law. My daughter had been hearing about you ever since she was a little child and she has written to me a glowing account of her impressions about yourself. I only wish I had the opportunity of conveying my thanks to you personally.

With best regards

Yours sincerely,

G. Bose

Letter dated 8.11.32 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud.

Nov. 8th 1932  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Dr. Bose,

I could not read your kind letter without feelings of embarrassment. In fact I do not deserve the gratitude of your children owing to the fact that I and my daughter were full in work, my wife and her sister not speaking your language and difficulties in our household making it hard for us to invite them for meals. So I had to be glad that one of my friends and pupils did it for me. I was very sorry that your charming daughter did not like our dogs. But you know in life we often get praised or blamed for no merit of our own.

With kindest regards

Yours

Freud

1st. Feb. 33

Letter dated 1.1.33 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud

January 1st 1933  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Dear Dr. Bose

The first letter of this new year goes out to you. I did study the essay you were so kind to send me and am deeply impressed by it. The contradictions within our current psychoanalytic theory are many and deep-going, and I reproach myself for not having given attention to your ideas before. That is not only my case. I suspect that your theory of opposite wishes is practically unknown among us and never mentioned or discussed. This attitude was to be abolished. I am eager to see it weighed and considered by English and German analysts all over. If you will permit me a suggestion : let us have a paper on the theory written especially for an analytic public which may appear in the Zeitschrift and Jones' Journal at the same time. We will do the translation into German here in Vienna. The essay you sent me is not quite appropriate, especially in its first parts as it is meant for the Indian Science Congress.

As regards my own judgement which you ask for, I can only give you first impressions which are of no great value. It needs more time and effort to overcome the feeling of unfamiliarity when confronted with a theory so different from the one professed hitherto and it is not easy to get out of the accustomed ways of thinking. So don't take it amiss when I say the theory of the opposite wishes strikes me as something less dynamical than morphological which could not have been evolved from the study of our pathological material. It appears to me flat so to say, it seems to lack a third dimension. I don't think it is able to explain anxiety or the phenomena of repression. Nor could I make the concession that the biological viewpoints in our psychology are out of place. But I am not ready yet to stand up for my own objections. I am still bewildered and undecided. I see that we did neglect the fact of the existence of opposite wishes from the three sources of bisexuality (male and female), ambivalence (love-hate) and the opposition of active-passive. These phenomena have to be worked into our system to make us see what modifications or corrections are necessary and how far we can acquiesce to your ideas. That is what I expect to be the result of the discussion after your paper is presented to the attention of our analyst and I will be the first to acknowledge our indebtedness to the working of your mind.

With affectionate regards to you and family.

Yours  
Freud

My dear Prof. Freud,

I am extremely grateful to you for your kind interest in my work. I shall be very glad to send you a suitable paper on the theory of the opposite wish for the consideration of the psycho-analytic group in Europe. It is really very good of you to say that you will have it translated in Vienna. I shall expunge the popular portions of the article that I sent you, and shall add and alter certain materials by which I hope the article will meet your requirements. I shall try to elucidate the points raised in your letter, such as the dynamic aspect of the theory, the explanation of repression and of anxiety. Of course I do not say that my theory will explain all the different facts of anxiety phenomena as known to us in connection with normal and abnormal life. But I do hope that I shall be able to give you a fairly satisfactory explanation on the basis of my theory. I further hope that I shall be able to show to you that my explanations of repression are simpler and more satisfactory than the current views about it. In fact I claim that the theory of the opposite wish is especially suited to explain repression. (Besides wish which by my very definition is a dynamic mental element, I admit no other psychic factor capable of bringing about a modification in a given psychic constellation. My theory of perception is based on my theory of wish). I have not been able to follow what you mean by saying that the theory lacks a third dimension. If you could make this clearer I might try to meet your objection. I shall be very thankful if you will kindly let me know what other points you require me to elucidate further.

I have 'accidentally' burnt my face and right hand rather badly. This has incapacitated me for any work for the present. I can barely sign my name. I hope to be all right within a month's time when I intend to take up the re-writing of the article. In any case I shall try to send it to you before the end of March.

Could you suggest any limit to the size of the paper so that it may not be too big for the journals.

Thanking you again for the great kindness you have always shown to me. Trusting this will find you all right.

Yours very sincerely

G. Bose

Letter dated 25.10.37 from Prof. Dr. Freud to Dr. G. Bose

Prof. Dr. Freud

26/X/1937  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Hochgeehrter Herr College !

Sie theilen mir mit dass Sie zum Vorsitzenden der Sektion fur Psychologie auf dem Congress gewalt worden sind der im Januar 1938 in Ihrer Stadt stattfinden soll. Ich begluck-wunsche Sie zu dieser wolverdienten Ehrung.

Ein wenig spater haben Sie mir einen Aufsatz von S. C. Mitra zukommen lassen betitelt "Contributions of Abnormal Psychology to Normal Psychology" zu dem ich vor dem Congress Stellung nehmen soll. Obwohl der Congress erst in Monaten abgehalten werden wird, beeile ich mich, Ihrem Wunsch schon heute zu entsprechen nicht nur wegen der Postdifferenz zwischen uns sondern auch wegen der Lebensunsicherheit die an mein Alter geknupft ist.

Die Ausserungen von Mitra bringen mich in Verlegenheit. Sie sagen namlich alles was ich selbst sagen konnte so dass ich ihnen nur wortlich beipflichten kann, und sugen es mit einer Klarheit und Entschiedenheit wie ich sie sehr selten angetroffen habe. Ich fuhle mich meiren gewiss noch jugendlichen Anhangertief verpflichtet dafür dass er unsere Sache so tapfer vertritt. Gewiss wird auch er nicht verkennen dass die Psychoanalyse unfertig und in vielen Punkten noch ungesichert ist, aber sie ist jung und wird gewiss unaufhaltsam fortschreiten bis der Wert ihrer Beitrage zur psychologischen Wissenschaft keinem Zweifel mehr unterliegt.

Mit herzlichen Wunschen for Ihr Wohlbefinden und fur den Erfolg des Congresses.

Ihr ergebener

Freud

Translation of the letter on page 26

Prof. Dr. Freud

26/X/1937  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19

Honoured Colleague,

You inform me that you have been elected President of the section of Psychology in the Congress that is to be held in your city in January 1938. I congratulate you on this well-earned honour.

A little later you sent me a paper from S. C. Mitra named "Contributions of Abnormal Psychology to Normal Psychology" and you asked me to express my observation regarding the same for the Congress. Although the Congress is to sit a few months later I hasten to accede to your request to-day not only because of the 'post difference' between us, but also because of the uncertainty of life that is inherent in my age.

Mitra's exposition has made me feel embarrassed. He has said everything that I could have said myself so that at best I can only support him. He has expressed everything with a clearness and definiteness that I have seldom come across. I feel myself deeply obliged to my follower, who must certainly be young for his bold representation of our position. Certainly he has not also failed to recognize that psychoanalysis is as yet imperfect and in many points still uncertain, but psychoanalysis is young and will certainly progress uninterruptedly till no doubt can exist about the value of its contribution to the Science of Psychology.

With hearty wishes for your good health and for the Congress.

Yours sincerely,

Freud

**Letter dated 31.10.37 from Anna Freud to Dr. G. Bose**

**Anna Freud.**

**October 31, 1937  
Wien IX, Berggasse 19**

**Dear Dr. Bose,**

I have passed on your letter to my father and he has answered it himself already. We have both been extremely interested in reading Dr. S. C. Mitra's excellent exposition of the subject under discussion. I wish India were not so far away, so that some time I could come and take part in your work there.

With kind regards.

Very sincerely yours

**Anna Freud**



